

SWOSU Professor of Nearly 40 Years Wins Bernhardt Award

04.01.2011

Dr. Charles Rogers (second from left) won the Bernhardt Academic Excellence Award for 2011 at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. The award for exceptional achievement in teaching, scholarship and service is made possible by Dr. William and Theta Juan Bernhardt (third and fourth from left) of Midwest City. SWOSU President Randy Beutler (left) and the Bernhardt's son, well-known author William Bernhardt (right), are also pictured.

Dr. Charles Rogers won the Bernhardt Academic Excellence Award for 2011 during the annual Bernhardt banquet held Thursday night (March 31) at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

Rogers, professor in the SWOSU Department of Chemistry and Physics won the prestigious award at a banquet held in the Memorial Student Center on the SWOSU campus. For winning the award, Rogers received a \$2,500 cash award, Waterford crystal clock and engraved pen set.

SWOSU alumni Dr. William and Theta Juan Bernhardt of Midwest City are sponsors of the annual award that goes to an outstanding faculty member who exhibits exceptional achievement in teaching, scholarship and service. Guest speaker for the evening was SWOSU Distinguished Alumnus Bob Blackburn, executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Dr. Charles Rogers came to Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 1972 on a one-year temporary appointment and nearly 40 years later is still teaching in the classrooms of SWOSU.

In junior high school, Rogers came across the book *Explaining the Atom* by Selig Hecht and he was absolutely enthralled to learn how many things can be explained by knowing about the atom. He was hooked and knew he wanted to become a physicist.

After high school graduation, Rogers went on active duty with the Utah National Guard. He joined the National Guard because he felt that he owed service to his country. He spent eight years in the

National Guard, eventually becoming a senior radar operator in an artillery target acquisition battalion. He also took three years from his studies to serve as a missionary in Germany (he was there when the Berlin Wall was built).

Rogers graduated from the University of Utah in 1965 with a B.A. in physics. He then attended Oregon State University where he received an M.S. in physics in 1968 and a Ph.D. in experimental nuclear physics in 1971. He spent one year as a visiting assistant professor at Louisiana State University before coming to SWOSU.

At SWOSU, Rogers has taught 32 different courses in the Department of Chemistry and Physics. He averages teaching 200 students each year, meaning he has taught over 8,000 students during his nearly 40 years at the university. He has served on a number of campus committees and has been active in Faculty Senate for 20 years. He

was chair of the FS's Judicial Committee for several years and vice president of the senate for one year. He has served 39 years on the Radiation Safety Committee and is currently the chair.

Rogers has written around 100 articles on subjects from Nobel Prize winners to nuclear weapons. Rogers was the technical editor for two encyclopedia volumes and for a set of children's encyclopedias. He has conducted numerous observatory viewing sessions for area public schools and the general public and has been guest speaker on such topics as astronomy, nuclear war, the dangers of too much UV and the so-called "ancient astronauts."

Rogers has served 39 years as a leader in the local unit of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, including 7 years as the leader of the congregation. He is an ordained minister and has spent huge amounts of time with welfare cases. He is also active in the SWOSU community chorus.

He married wife JoAnne in 1969 and they have three daughters who are now grown and have families of their own.

Previous winners of the Bernhardt Award are (in order by year): Dr. Vilas Prabhu, Dr. Stuart Burchett, Dr. Gary Wolgamott, Dr. Terry Segress, Dr. James Hunsicker, Dr. Jill Jones, Dr. James Breckenridge, Dr. John Ludrick, Dr. W. Steven Pray, Dr. Les Crall, Dr. Peter Grant, Dr. John Hayden, Dr. Virgil Van Dusen, Steve Strickler, Dr. Mary Aspedon, Dr. John Woods and Dr. Scott Long.